



Raising Voices and Choices Through Education

Tim Stewart

Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan

This brief article posits that the drive to privatize public services in the US (United States) coupled with growing economic inequality are now so extreme that they threaten a cornerstone of American liberal democracy—quality public education. The argument rests on the assumption that there is such a concept as “the public good”. This idea of civic-mindedness is used to contrast examples from education of the rampant marketization of all aspects of contemporary society. The market view of life is an ideological belief that everything can and should be valued in monetary terms. However, quality public education, is assumed to promote a collective sense of civic awareness that operates on a different ideological plane from market values, which promote a narrow agenda of self interest above all else. Viewing schools as workplaces, the article looks at the growing influence of market values in education and highlights the potential threat to democratic society inherent in this influence.

Keywords: education reform, careerism, ideology, inequality, social mobility

Introduction

With wealth and power around the globe today surging upward to the few privileged, ordinary people increasingly feel disconnected from decision makers. In response, citizens seem to be engaged in a frantic search for leaders who can tell us what we should do to redress current imbalances. Since the elite appears is merely interested in fronting phantom leaders who espouse the common good with empty rhetoric as they protect the privileged, citizens around the world have begun to seek the leadership they desire within themselves.

Protests are erupting everywhere, such as the Middle East, Manhattan, Greece, and even Tokyo. From the Arab spring to the occupy protests and the anti-nuclear awakening, the common thread is rethinking what we value in our societies. The incursion of corporate values into public space has been accelerating since the 1970s. After the US (United States) Supreme Court ruled that money is speech, the voices of ordinary Americans, which have all but been drowned out in the gush of cash now are flooding the political process. Americans are highly tolerant of economic inequality, largely due to the ingrained belief in opportunities for social mobility that the “free market” opens up. The occupy protests, though, challenge the dominant narrative. They tell the story of leadership frozen in a myopic gaze focused on the welfare of the most privileged rather than on creating a broad, new vision for the nation.

Warren Buffet has more than once said that, “There has been class warfare going on for the last 20 years, and my class has won” (Sargent, 2011). Mr. Buffet did not say this, pumping his fists in a victory lap for the 1%. While many less-fortunate citizens of the US ferociously support policies that benefit the super-rich elite at the expense of the common good, Warren Buffet seemed bent on steering the nation towards correcting the

Tim Stewart, associate professor, Research Center for the Promotion of Excellence in Higher Education, Kyoto University.

existing social imbalance. Even conservative thinkers like Fukuyama (2012) worry about recent trends: “Americans may today benefit from cheap cell phones, inexpensive clothing, and Facebook, but they increasingly cannot afford their own homes, or health insurance, or comfortable pensions when they retire”. In fact, the flow of inequity gushing upward has siphoned so much wealth from the public purse that the fundamental core of essential public services is threatened. Public education is a cornerstone of the common good that is simply too important to fail for civil society.

The value inherent in maintaining quality public schools is the opportunity that they provide to a broad base of citizens. Having an exemplary public education system is a choice of priorities. It is the kind of choice that reveals the underlying values of a society. Among other things, Americans value family, freedom, as well as social mobility—often called the *American Dream*. People are bombarded with messages emphasizing opportunities for success to those who play by the rules and work hard, but the occupy protesters are raising questions about the nature of the rules themselves. Who gets to make the rules? Why? What agenda do the rule makers have?

This article is concerned with diminishing opportunities and fading fairness with a focus on preserving the greatest avenue of social mobility—access to quality education. To address this concern, I will reflect on the need to attract the best people into education by examining the nature of the teaching profession from the perspective of workplace/labor issues. Since over one million American teachers due to be retired this decade, I would like to contrast the promise with the reality of the teaching profession from the perspective of the novice teacher. Since advanced credentials are becoming more important, I will presume that novice teachers have attended at least some graduate-level courses.

The contemporary university landscape is illustrative, because public systems of higher education are now underfunded and depend heavily on the methods of the private sector for survival and growth. The accompanying huge increases in tuition have resulted in an unprecedented wave of student debt. This fruit of privatization and so-called “market discipline” limits freedom as it multiplies insecurity and fear. Consciously or not, tuition debt encourages conformity. Upon completion of their programs, most prospective teachers will have accumulated a significant debt (Green, 2008; Thompson, 2010). They may also have a good deal of teaching experience due to the casualization of the faculty workforce. Colleges are now dependent on a “flexible workforce” (i.e., undervalued and disposable). Graduate students and other non-tenure track instructors teach about 75% of the large undergraduate classes (Schrecker, 2011). After graduating, many novice teachers will work in low-paying and insecure positions (Sun, 2010), and are likely to leave the profession within five years (Ravitch, 2010b). Most citizens would agree that attracting the best people into teaching is in the public interest. How open and attractive are the opportunities for the best candidates to succeed in a teaching career?

Narrowed Points of Entry to the Best Colleges

Students around the world compete to enter top American colleges every year. Presumably, this elite competition is meritocratic in nature. In reality, however, the nation’s elite schools bend over backward to service the super rich and well connected applicants. For instance, in the case of Duke University, recruiters were told outright to enroll children of the wealthy (Golden, 2006). So-called “legacy” admissions appear to be increasing as schools look to the golden goose of private capital to build luxurious dorm rooms, sports, and research facilities. This was clearly a case of “affirmative action for wealthy whites” (Golden, 2006, p. 125).

According to Golden (2006), the historical root of legacy preference was to limit enrollment of Jews into the exclusive club of elite white schools. Today, the deserving group that this system deprived of admission is Asian students, despite the recent “Linderella” story of Jeremy Lin from Harvard to NBA sensation.

Athletic scholarships would appear to be an alternative avenue for some students who denied admission solely on the basis of academic merit. Turn on your television any weekends in the US and you will see college sports teams with numerous athletes of color. However, the playing fields are not level. While, wealthy white students can enter elite colleges by being selected to teams such as sailing, polo, lacrosse, crew, and fencing, virtually no minorities or low-income whites play these patrician sports. The cost of equipment alone is prohibitive, but wealthy families also have the advantage of being able to pay for private coaches for all sports, as well as the best academic tutors.

Currently, an excessive number of children of wealthy parents are allowed into the top American universities not as a result of academic merit, but simply because of their class advantage. For them, the high cost of tuition and burden of student debt are simply non-issues. Echoing Warren Buffet’s concerns we might ask: Is it in the common interest of liberal democracies to expand a super rich plutocracy? And how many legacy graduates from the very best schools go into education as opposed to finance or corporate fields? Put another way, how many prospective educators have been denied access to top universities in the stampede for legacy cash? By blatantly ignoring academic merit through legacy admissions, elite colleges disadvantage deserving lower- and middle- class students. The hierarchy of higher education in terms of both school brands/ranking and faculty ranks promotes a kind of academic class-consciousness that accepts class division.

Tiered Labor in the Academic Workplace

Graduate programs and faculties of education regularly send novices into educational workplaces. Prospective teachers commonly start their career journeys at university with glowing idealism. Novice teachers enter university programs hoping to find work that is fulfilling and provides a living wage. Many, idealistically, aim to improve their communities. The university campus is not just a place of scholarship, it is also a workplace. Current campus work relations affect novice teachers in multiple ways. The class nature of the academic workplace is largely invisible since it has been internalized as a natural order.

The fact is that academics, including teacher trainers, work in a class structure: “The most dramatically tiered labor system in North America” (Bousquet, 2008, p. 28). The great majority of teachers on US college campuses are either contingent workers or graduate students. The contingent class does the majority of the teaching while reaping the lowest rewards. These “invisible” teachers endure a hollow professional existence as non-tenure-track expendables (Schrecker, 2010). After extensive academic training, professionals may carry on for years teaching a full load of courses at a very low pay with no benefit because of the promise of a tenure-track opening. The original source of optimistic predictions about the coming surplus of tenured posts appears to have been labor economist, and Princeton University president William Bowen. Bowen and Sosa (1989) predicted a flood of new tenured positions between 1994 and 2012. However, their analysis was skewed by a ridiculously low estimate of dead-end part time and temporary jobs, now euphemistically called “flexible labor”.

Unfair work conditions at universities can be ignored by tenured faculty, since many accepted that the problem was not ideologically created, but rather it was within the control of market mechanisms. The job-market theory of graduate education is comforting in its analysis that “graduate education produces more

degree holders than necessary, and that this 'overproduction' can be controlled 'from the demand side' by encouraging early retirements and 'from the supply side' by shrinking graduate programs" (Bousquet, 2008, p. 20). But vacated posts are often eliminated or staffed by temporary faculty hires. Bousquet (2008) argued that the casualization of the academic workforce is now fundamentally tied to the focus on profit, thereby, making graduate student labor essential. Supply and Demand Theory determines that this excess pool of professional labor serves to keep wages for novices depressed. Without exaggerating the situation, it can pay to quit academia and work at Wall Mart (Schrecker, 2010, p. 207).

The workplace issues of tenured faculty have largely been separated from those of the flexible workforce mass of graduate and temporary employees. As Bousquet (2008, p. 21) explained, "The idea of a job market operates rhetorically... serving largely to legitimate faculty passivity in the face of this wholesale restructuring of the academic workplace". Tenured faculty members enjoyed the privileges of their status because of the supply of disposable labor. In return, there was little feeling of coworker solidarity for graduate students and novice teachers who toiled with no security to support this tiered labor market (Krause, Nolan, Palm, & Ross, 2008; Rajagopal, 2002). Cheap and flexible labor allowed many institutions to invest in ballooning administrative salaries, grand facilities, and expensive sports teams. Furthermore, campus branding shifted more money upward to the extreme tip of the top tier as schools competed to hire the academic superstars who rarely had time to teach. The fragmented higher education labor market rewarded the powerful elite tier as it weakened faculty power (Woodhouse, 2009).

College labor insecurity was engineered by the managerial class that run universities, many of whom are drawn from the business community. Their goal is to reshape academic institutions according to their own values: efficiency, competition, and profit maximization. They have largely succeeded. Self-interested academics have been bought into the managerial model. Despite their reputations for radicalism, universities tend to be hotbeds of careerism. Careerism breeds conformity as professors are preoccupied with climbing the ladder and building up their *vitas*. Since the competition for scarce posts is so fierce, challenging the status quo could be proved to be fatal to one's academic career (Rajagopal, 2002; Woodhouse, 2009). At the same time, market ideology has shifted education away from knowledge to empower citizens towards training. The irony, of course, is that our desperate need for new ideas requires extensive promotion of innovative thinking, not safe "yes-man" conformity. This is the reality of today's academic culture where novice teachers start out.

Winners and Losers

The changes of higher education summarized above highlight the extent to which market ideology saturates people's lives. Success in market terms is framed as personal wealth accumulation. The current global market system pays extreme rewards to the winners. Most Americans wholeheartedly support this economic system, since they believe that it rewards effort and productive contribution, not class. The dominant narrative says that anyone can be a winner if only they would try hard enough. People who cannot make it simply have themselves to blame and deserve to lose. Advantages for achieving success of individuals born into the upper class are not mentioned in this narrative.

Confidence in the availability of opportunity was reflected in a recent study. Researchers found that no matter what their political alignment are, a vast majority of Americans believed that the US is much more equitable than it is in fact (Norton & Ariely, 2011). Most respondents guessed that the top 20% of income earners control about 59% of national wealth and the bottom 20% control about 3%. In fact, the top 20%

controls 84% of the wealth and the bottom quintile has 0.1%. The bottom 40% of the population controls just 0.3% of the country's total wealth.

Americans are tolerant of inequality in outcomes as long as opportunities flourish. But Warren and Tyagi (2003) illustrated how difficult it was for hardworking families to make ends meet today in comparison with the 1970s. The strongest predictor today of upward mobility is parental wealth, not hard work and education (DeParle, 2012). Many Americans have slipped out of the middle class since 2000 (Acs, 2011; Warren & Tyagi, 2003). In the face of what appears too many to be an unfair situation, the Occupy Movement suddenly dawned last fall. Like the Arab Spring protesters, many people in the US are yearning for changes.

The profile of education remains high, because getting a good education is equated with enjoying a good quality of life. However, education policy, is increasingly controlled by wealthy corporate interests who strongly advocated a reform agenda based on the dominant narrative of free market ideology. Typically, reform policies mirror the linear organization model preferred by huge corporate bureaucracies focused on standard outputs. Given the passion for centralized control of teachers and education, novices entering school workplaces should think carefully about the background and direction of current education reform policies. Nineteenth century concepts are not the path forward (Robinson, n.d.).

Influence of Market Values in the School Workplace

Vested interests naturally work to maintain their power. The market narrative enables class control through two fundamental claims. First, there is no alternative to a "self-regulated" free market. Second, this economic system will deliver the improved living standards to each subsequent generation. To make these gains, people need to get a good education, work hard, and play by the rules. Currently, many middle and working class Americans are anxious about their eroding status and realize that this promise might not be kept. The responsibility for the instability that people now feel in their lives has been deflected by powerful interests away from the massive accumulation of wealth at the top of the public school system. The dominant narrative promoted by these interest groups can be paraphrased as follows: The United States is losing its global dominance, because American kids do not learn. And the reason why they are not learning is because their teachers are lousy. The teachers are bad because public teachers' unions protect thousands of lazy and cynical teachers. These government workers do nothing but collect huge salaries. They despise their students and hate their job (Shaker & Heilman, 2004).

This narrative is spun by financial interests looking for the next investment boom, and education is a prime target. It is vital for new teachers entering schools to understand the image of a reformed educational system advocated by privileged interests. Only "market discipline" can improve public schools, according to the dominant narrative. In 1988, Albert Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers from 1974 to 1997, pushed the idea of charter schools to collaborate with public schools and help motivate disengaged students. When he saw his dream usurped by business interests, he turned against charter schools (Ravitch, 2010a). Turning the public school system into a commodity for making profit was not his vision. On the other hand, investors see education as a gold mine.

The shift of public services into private hands was attracting a deluge of hedge fund investment money pouring into for-profit education (Ravitch, 2010a). Market forces drove rationalization and instrumentalism that fit the curricular focus on "basics". Paradoxically, the narrative on school reform also called for innovation and flexibility, because service and information sectors benefited from risk-taking and autonomous thought. At

the same time, accountability was demanded and took the form of standardization and continuous testing of basic skills. Improving schools through competition was not inherently bad, but the profit motive driving privatization of public services often promoted performance standards focused on short-term fixes geared towards punishing laggards (Hargreaves, 2003; Shaker & Heilman, 2004). With the stakes so high, schools have incentives to fake test results and shun students who might pull down their scores, such as English as a Second Language student. Basically, the market teaches the ethic of winning at any cost. Because losing is not an option, any means that results in rising shareholder value is acceptable. Teachers simply need to bite the bullet and get with the program.

Involvement by the Gates Foundation in reshaping public schools is typical of the shift towards privatization in all of the public services. Standardization is essential for industry and corporate bureaucracy, but cookie-cutter solutions cannot work in education. When studies of the Gates' US\$2 billion initiative to turn large schools into small schools showed improvement only in schools that failed to enroll the same diverse student populations found in most public schools, the foundation responded by stopping the studies and ramping up "advocacy work" funds (Ravitch, 2010b). The foundation funded so many leaders in education that unbiased opinions about its efforts were almost non-existent since: "Academics carefully avoid expressing any views that might alienate the big foundations" (Ravitch, 2010b, p. 201). In contrast to the Ford and Carnegie foundations, the new venture philanthropists are very "hands-on". The Gates Foundation is directly involved in restructuring the public school system. While it demands teachers to be evaluated in order to fire "bad" teachers, the foundation itself is not accountable. Nobody from this mega-rich foundation was elected to run public schools. Accountability is a luxury that powerful elites somehow cannot afford.

Ravitch (2010b) clearly demonstrated that supporters of school reform generally overlooked the education research literature as they adopted wholesale the current common sense myth. Those brave enough to offer alternative narratives of public education must take on the massive wealth and power of privilege.

Educators and the Common Good

Many teachers will at least partially adhere to the values of efficiency, competition, profit maximization, and self-regulation. In addition, teachers normally assign grades, and this involves assessing the best work (win) vs. inadequate work (lose). And yet educators value compassion and nurturing. Classroom teachers often have to deal with students from troubled backgrounds, so they cannot simply act according to a win-lose ethic. Novices will be likely to become teachers for reasons that are deeper than maximizing their income. Job satisfaction comes from non-monetary enrichment. While competition and efficiency are values that many teachers will draw on to motivate students, cooperation and group understanding tend to be highly valued amongst teaching professionals, such as fairness and job security.

Growing public debt in the US caused mostly tax cuts for the wealthy (Tritch, 2011) was seized upon in early 2011 by several state governors as an excuse for weakening the power of public employee unions. The most high profile attempts to strip collective bargaining rights from public workers occurred in Wisconsin. Even after teachers agreed to accept salary cuts and pay a greater share of their health care and pension costs to help balance the state budget, the governor pushed to crush the union. This ideological campaign for the rights of billionaires over state workers like teachers incensed Americans of all political stripes. Many citizens believed that workers deserved some basic rights (Schlesinger, 2011). Teachers sought to protect their professional rights and the interests of students from interference by interest groups through collective

organization. This type of collective activity appeared to pay off, as academic outcomes in unionized systems were consistently high (Ravitch, 2010b).

In the 1970s, professors eventually joined the wave of public worker organization led in the 1950s by schoolteachers, police, nurses, and firefighters (Schrecker, 2010). But college professors tend to see themselves as similar to lawyers and doctors. This professional image dampened support for collective bargaining which was never embraced wholeheartedly by tenured faculty at elite schools. Schrecker (2010) showed in her book how many faculty and graduates of elite schools display an attitude of entitlement as they imagine themselves to be far superior to their colleagues from tier-two institutions. This translates into a distaste for the kind of salary equality earned through collective action. More recently, faculty unions have offered tepid support for the union organizing activities of graduate student workers and contract teachers. The stance of tenured Yale faculty and elite officers in the Modern Language Association towards graduate student organization at Yale in the 1990s was illustrative (Bousquet, 2008; Robin, 2003). Despite the popular characterization of university faculty as radical liberals, here again privilege sided with the status quo.

Today's negative image of organized labor in the US is part of a long campaign of disinformation and censorship waged by corporate interests (Cole, Megivern, & Hilgert, 2011). Public education, teachers, and unions are consistently portrayed in the US corporate media as destructive forces (Goldstein, 2010). Despite strong rhetoric about the importance of education, many states of the US state governments have cut school funding. Resulting teacher layoffs severely affected the prospects of novice teachers. In this way, the choice to lightly tax the wealthiest in society is a choice with deep social ramifications.

People are responding to this disparity. By nearly a two-to-one margin, Ohio voters turned down a bill calling for sweeping reform of collective bargaining rights for all public workers. In early 2011, Wisconsin teachers and their many supporters drew a line in the snow and fought back hard against the dominant narrative that advocates tax cuts for the wealthy and cut backs for everyone else. This is a prime example of the leadership that teachers are showing in their communities to fight for the preservation of quality public services.

Many of the novice teachers now graduating from college will have difficulty in finding secure full time work. They are also likely to begin their careers with large tuition debts in what Hargreaves (2003) called the "age of insecurity". The message for novice teachers from the protests of the Occupy Movement and in Wisconsin is that they have far weightier issues to deal with than simply narrow technical skills. Market fundamentalist ideology claims exclusive authority for solutions to social dilemmas. Yet, despite controlling so much of the planet's wealth, the elite is unable to lead the world out of the current crisis it has created. The solution to the current malaise according to Wall Street, which is wealthier for the rich through tax cuts and further privatization of public goods. However, when private capital makes bad decisions, it quickly abandons "market discipline" and demands taxpayer sacrifice. These sacrifices defund public resources like water systems, schools, libraries, and parks that benefit all citizens and improve society. The author suggests that these are the institutions society needs to deem "too big to fail" if we value the concept of the "common good". In order to protect the common good, more voices must be raised to support resources like public schools (not to mention streetlights and police officers).

The trouble with so much public debate in the US today is that there are often only ridiculously simplistic false choices, which are often offered while the necessary hard compromises are scoffed at being somehow weak. Serious observers like Fukuyama (2012) have called for an end to the supremacy of economics over

representative government. Recognizing that the essential center post of liberal democracy might give way as the middle-class withers, Fukuyama would like to see moves to restore the role of government in serving the greater public interest. Fukuyama encouraged an honest debate on the strengths and weaknesses of the market system. In his critique, he recognized the legitimacy of Tea Party and Occupy protesters who are fed up with money politics solely for the benefit of the privileged class. Most radically, he called on citizens to question the dominant narrative claim “that their interests will be best served by ever-freer markets and smaller states”, and instead began a search for an “alternative narrative” that is highly nuanced. Educators should not underestimate their potential influence in articulating that narrative.

Attracting the “best” into teaching has never been more important. This is because the current systems of energy, work, government, business, and finance are crumbling. Although it is certainly easy to be pessimistic about current trends, this is a time of wonderful opportunity. Oligarchic structures favoring increased corporate control over public services are under greater scrutiny as private business failed to deliver on its fundamental promise of cost-saving efficiency. There are things that for-profit companies do very well, but services like public education are not among them. Cumbersome corporate bureaucracies are inefficient at fostering and assessing the essential humanism of the best educational experience. Good teaching and education policy are not linear like a PowerPoint presentation. The “best” teachers are needed precisely because of the complexity of rapid change. This underlines the importance of meritocratic access to the best education. We need to attract the most creative individuals into teaching and treat them like valued professionals with salaries equivalent to other professions. Current reform policies of the education system are too focused on conformity and punishment, while contemporary social changes demand flexibility and innovation. The public education system needs to be renewed creatively for the common good of society, not to be consolidated for profit maximization. In short, reform of public education must be discussed in public instead of plotted inside closed corporate boardrooms by the privileged 1% who would never consider sending their children to public schools (Farmer, 2012). In our lifetime, there has not been a more pivotal moment for teachers to raise their voices.

References

- Acs, G. (2011). *Downward mobility from the middle class: Waking up from the American dream*. New York: The Pew Charitable Trusts.
- Bousquet, M. (2008). *How the university works: Higher education and the low-wage nation*. New York: New York University Press.
- Bowen, W. G., & Sosa, J. A. (1989). *Prospects for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences: A study of factors affecting demand and supply, 1987-2012*. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press.
- Cole, P., Megivern, L., & Hilgert, J. (2011). *American labor in U.S. history textbooks: How labor's story is distorted in high school history textbooks*. New York: The Albert Shanker Institute.
- DeParle, J. (2012, January). Harder for Americans to rise from lower rungs. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Farmer, M. (2012, May 30). CPS parent Matt farmer puts Penny Pritzker on trial at CTU's standing strong rally. *YouTube.com* [video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMUboOIQT48>
- Fukuyama, F. (2012). The future of history: Can liberal democracy survive the decline of the middle class? *Foreign Affairs*, 91(1), 53-61.
- Golden, D. (2006). *The price of admission: How America's ruling class buys its way into elite colleges and who gets left outside the gate*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Goldstein, R. A. (2010). Imaging the frame: Media representations of teachers, their unions, NCLB, and education reform. *Educational Policy*, 25(4), 543-576. doi: 10.1177/0895904810361720

- Green, A. (2008). The high cost of learning: Tuition, educational aid, and the new economics of prestige in higher education. In M. Krause, M. Nolan, M. Palm, & A. Ross (Eds.), *The university against itself: The NYU strike and the future of the academic workplace* (pp. 83-96). Philadelphia, P. A.: Temple University Press.
- Hargreaves, A. (2003). *Teaching in the knowledge society: Education in the age of insecurity*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Krause, M., Nolan, M., Palm, M., & Ross, A. (Eds.). (2008). *The university against itself: The NYU strike and the future of the academic workplace*. Philadelphia, P. A.: Temple University Press.
- Norton, M. I., & Ariely, D. (2011). Building a better America—One wealth quintile at a time. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 6(1), 9-12. doi: 10.1177/1745691610393524
- Rajagopal, I. (2002). *Hidden academics: Contract faculty in Canadian universities*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Ravitch, D. (2010a). *The myth of charter schools*. The New York Review of Books. Retrieved from <http://www.nybooks.com/>
- Ravitch, D. (2010b). *The death and life of the great American school system*. New York: Basic Books.
- Robin, C. (2003). Blacklisted and blue: On theory and practice at Yale. In B. Johnson, P. Kavanagh, & K. Mattson (Eds.), *Steal this university* (pp. 107-122). New York: Routledge.
- Robinson, K. (n.d.). Ken Robinson: Author/educator. *TED.com*. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/speakers/sir_ken_robinson.html
- Sargent, G. (2011, September). There's been class warfare for the last 20 years, and my class has won [The Plum Line Blog]. The Washington Post. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com>
- Schlesinger, R. (2011, February). Poll: Voters oppose Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker in union standoff. *U.S. News and World Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.usnews.com/>
- Schrecker, E. (2010). *The lost soul of higher education*. New York: The New Press.
- Schrecker, E. (2011). *The humanities on life support* [Academe Online]. Retrieved from <http://www.aaup.org/>
- Shaker, P., & Heilman, E. E. (2004). The new common sense of education: Advocacy research versus academic authority. *Teachers College Record*, 106, 1444-1470.
- Sun, Y. (2010). Standards, equity, and advocacy: Employment conditions of ESOL teachers in adult basic education and literacy systems. *TESOL Journal*, 1(1), 142-158. doi: 10.5054/tj.2010.215135.
- Thompson, D. (2010, August). This is what the student debt crisis looks like. *The Atlantic Monthly*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/>
- Tritch, T. (2011, July). How the deficit got this big. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/>
- Warren, E., & Tyagi, A. W. (2003). *The two-income trap: Why middle-class parents are going broke*. New York: Basic Books.
- Woodhouse, H. (2009). *Selling out: Academic freedom and the corporate market*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.